
CAPITOL CONNECTION

A Weekly Update of News and Views
For Opinion Shapers and Policy Makers

Congressman Gary G. Miller
42nd District, California



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House Fails to Approve War Funding

On Thursday, House Democrats voted to deny funding for day-to-day combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Without action by Congress, current funding is set to expire in the middle of June at which point the Department of Defense would be required to begin temporarily laying off workers. During floor consideration of an emergency supplemental spending bill, Democrats voted to strip out \$162.5 billion in funding for the needs of our men and women deployed in harm's way. In its place, the measure was amended to include language that would set an arbitrary timeline for withdrawal from Iraq, attach more than \$21.2 billion in unrelated non-emergency spending, and enact a \$54 billion tax increase targeted at small business owners. Congressman Miller strongly opposed this effort to hijack the troop funding bill for partisan ends. As the appropriations process moves forward, he believes firmly that Congress must provide our troops the resources they need by passing a clean troop funding bill without delay and without needless strings attached.

Farm Bill Heads to President's Desk

The House on Wednesday approved a bloated Farm Bill that reauthorizes U.S. agricultural policies at a total cost to taxpayers of \$307 billion. Since the last Farm Bill was approved in 2002, farm income has more than doubled as the price of certain key crops has risen by as much as 281 percent. At a time of record food prices and record farm income, Congressman Miller believes it is more important than ever to reform outdated farm subsidy programs. However, the bill approved by the House fails to do that. Rather than scaling back these wasteful subsidies, which were originally designed to help farmers through hard times, the bill instead expands these programs. Making matters worse, the Farm Bill extends subsidies for ethanol which have increased food prices while doing nothing to improve the price or efficiency of gas in California. Congressman Miller reluctantly opposed the measure because he believes it spends too much money and contains too little reform. The bill, which was approved by the Senate on Thursday, now heads to the President's desk where it is expected to be vetoed shortly.

Congressman Miller Cosponsors Bill to Require English-Only Ballots

This week, Congressman Miller cosponsored legislation mandating that ballots for federal elections be printed in English. Currently, federal law requires almost 300 counties in 30 states to have bilingual voting materials available. Not only are bilingual ballots an affront to generations of immigrants who have made great sacrifices to learn English in order to become naturalized citizens, they also contradict the "melting pot" ideal that has made the United States the most successful multiethnic nation on earth. Congressman Miller believes firmly that if individuals must learn and understand English in order to become citizens, then there is no reason that local governments should be required to provide ballots in any language other than English. He is proud to cosponsor this commonsense proposal and will continue to advocate for policies that ensure our country is unified under the English language.

Mission Viejo to Hold Street Painting Festival

This weekend, the Children's Creative Festival will celebrate its tenth annual street painting festival, Fun with Chalk, at the Mission Viejo Community Center. In addition to street painting, an Italian tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, the event will also feature art workshops, live music, and entertainment. For those interested in attending, the festival will take place at the Norman P. Murray Community Center at 24932 Veterans Way and La Paz Road in Mission Viejo from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. this Saturday and Sunday. Congressman Miller congratulates the Children's Creative Festival organizers and participants for inspiring creativity and promoting art appreciation. For more information, please visit the Fun with Chalk website at: www.funwithchalk.org.